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In the course of a stimulating article on *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*,[1] Professor John MacQueen challenges the common assumption that the earliest version of the *Satyre* was that played at Linlithgow (1540) and that this version was afterwards rewritten and expanded for the Cupar (1552) and Edinburgh (1554) representations. The present form of the play, he suggests, belongs "*in its essentials to the thirties, even the twenties*" [italics mine] rather than to the fifties of the sixteenth century; it may even at this early date have been given at Cupar, Fife, in the vicinity of Lindsay's own home, a possibility which would not preclude a second performance there in 1552. If, he contends, the "generally accepted" idea of King Humanitie as a portrait of James V is to stand, and if the 1540 Linlithgow version (where, according to the extant summary, the King has no speech until the end of the play and then merely to ratify the Acts) is the original version, then we are faced with the "major" problem that Lindsay first drew this portrait for the expanded 1552 Cupar performance ten years after the death of James at Solway Moss in 1542. Further, certain lines in the *Satyre* referring to the extreme youth of King Humanitie and his sexual inexperience either presuppose the situation in a realm that has "ouir young ane king," as envisaged by Ihone the Comoun Weill in the *Dreme*, written in 1528, when James was only fifteen, or are directly quoted by Lindsay from his *Complaynt* (1529-30). These parallels, and others which he cites, would, Professor MacQueen argues, be very relevant to the period before James's first marriage in 1537 but have "little relevance to the situation in 1540, 1552 or 1554." The first performance should therefore probably date from "some time during the earlier fifteen-thirties"; the Linlithgow performance was probably a "truncated" one for a special occasion; and the 1552 performance was merely "a revival of a play, which was then some twenty years old."

But before we dislodge the Linlithgow version from its traditional place, let us remind ourselves of the circumstances of this 1540

[1] *Studies in Scottish Literature*. III (Jan. 1966), 129-143. The section to be discussed begins p. 135.

Epiphany performance in the royal palace in the presence of James V and his queen and the whole Council, spiritual and temporal. The evidence rests on two documents, neither quite free from obscurity: "The Copie of the nootes of the interluyde," obtained from "a scotts man of our sorte" who was in the audience, and Sir William Eure's covering letter from Berwick to Thomas Cromwell, Lord Privy Seal of England, commenting on the Scottish King's reaction at the end of the play, as reported by Mr. Thomas Bellendyn.[2]

Eure, following, no doubt, the heading of the enclosure, designates the entire production as "ane enterluyde." Hence Professor MacQueen's suggestion that the Linlithgow play was probably comparatively short. This may well be true but too much weight should not be given to the ambiguous term "interlude," in regard to which historians of the drama are at variance and which the rare Scottish contemporary instances do little to clarify.[3] We need go no further than the opening sentence of the "nootes"; "In the first entres come in Solaice whose parte was but to make mery, sing ballettes with his ffelowes and Drink at the interluydes of the play. . ." Here there are "interluydes" *within* the "interluyde." According to Eure's report, the purpose of the play, presented "by the King's pleasour, he being preuey therunto," was to expose abuses in the realm, in particular "noughtiness in Religion"; and (for James V was a zealous reformer) to give him an opportunity in person, when the play was over, to announce drastic action against recalcitrant ecclesiastics. Of these internal "interluydes" there is no mention; in the "nootes" they are mentioned only to be dismissed. The "scotts man of our sorte" is obviously interested in the play as propaganda rather than as entertainment; and for the English representative it is "the effect thereof" that counts.

But those "interluydes" arouse curiosity. Were they merely concessions to a festive season, no more than intermissions in the serious matter for which Solaice and his companions provided short musical turns and the three courtiers comic business in the *miles gloriosus* tradition? Or were they more of the order of those dramatic episodes to which the term interlude is repeatedly applied in George Bannatyne's

[2] *The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount,* ed. Douglas Hamer, Scottish Text Society, 4 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1931-36), II, 1-6. My line references are to the Charteris text in this edition.

[3] See my *Mediaeval Plays in Scotland* (Edinburgh and London, 1927), p. 75.

text of the *Satyre*?[4] In the latter case a more extended play may be imagined, though, with certain important rôles apparently missing, not on the scale of the play as we know it.

As to the quality of this version as a whole, Professor MacQueen has no doubt as to its "general inferiority" to the Cupar version: ". . . only one original speech seems up to Lindsay's usual standard — the remark of the poor man that the king in the play

> was not the king of Scotlande, for there was an other king in Scotland that hanged John Armestrang with his fellowes, and Sym the larde, and many other moe, which had pacified the countrey, and stanched thifte, but he had lefte one thing undon, which perteyned as well to his charge as thother."[5]

Inferior this version may have been, though to the implications of this I shall return. I am, however, a little uneasy that the evaluation should rest on a comparison between Lindsay's full text of the play and the briefest of summaries of the Linlithgow reporter.

To retain the Linlithgow version as the first, which was afterwards rewritten for Cupar and Edinburgh, involves us, Professor MacQueen believes, in the assumption that about 1552 Lindsay expanded the part played by the King and introduced Diligence, Wantonnes, Sensualitie, Gude-Counsell, Veritie, Chastitie, Correctioun, the Taylour and Sowtar with their wives, the Pardoner, Johne the Common-weill and Folie — "almost everything, in fact, which makes the play memorable as a play rather than as a document of the Scottish Reformation."[6] Because of his faith in Lindsay's ability as an entertainer and dramatist, he is unwilling to accept this view; and, in any case, he suggests, the internal evidence is "decisive" against it. But is it?

As one not disposed to favour a strictly historical interpretation of King Humanitie, I feel no compulsion to place Lindsay's conception of the character in the early years of the reign of James V. Part I of the *Satyre* shows King Humanitie *"tanquam tabula rasa,"* his good and bad angels set for the battle for his soul, which is "redie for gude and ill." (l. 226) He succumbs to the Vices and is redeemed by the Virtues. In short, we have a conventional Morality plot. This is not, of course, to deny that from time to time the playwright would draw on his own earlier experiences at the Scottish court. It is to deny that such material,

[4] *The Bannatyne Manuscript,* Scottish Text Society, ed. W. Tod Ritchie, 4 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1928-33), III, 87-238. See esp. pp. 101, 130, 149, 238.

[5] MacQueen, p. 135.

[6] Ibid., p. 136.

manipulated dramatically, would have no relevancy by the fifties of that century. The then last King of Scotland and tales of his minority would surely not so soon fade from the minds of his people; and faced with a young stage-king on the playfields of Cupar and Edinburgh, many of those present would naturally identify the two rulers in some general way and remain on the alert to detect possible innuendoes and topical overtones. Even so, Lindsay's portrayal of King Humanitie would not depend for success on the recognition of any such overtones. It would have then, as today, high dramatic effectiveness in its own right in the framework of the play.

Let us look more closely at some of the parallels.[7] Reference has already been made to Lindsay's self-plagiarism in the all but verbatim use of lines from the 1530 *Complaynt,* lines to which I myself called attention many years ago.[8] The time lapse here would seem to present no real problem. What in the poem was applicable to the particular and localized case of the "rewlars" of young James V, was in the mouth of Falset, dramatically pertinent to the entourage of King Humanitie. Should the retention in his memory of a dozen of his own lines for some twenty odd years seem a feat beyond credulity, Lindsay may even have taken a "wee read" of the lines to refresh his memory. Though there are here no close verbal echoes, the seduction of James by his courtiers as related in the *Complaynt* may conceivably have inspired the seduction of King Humanitie in the *Satyre*; but the episode is stock Morality procedure. The plea to King James in the *Dreme* to refrain from pre-marital lechery, and the situation which provoked the plea, may have been in Lindsay's mind when he had Correctioun in the *Satyre* advise King Humanitie to receive Chastitie into his service pending his marriage to some queen of royal blood, but the advice is apposite in terms of the drama; nor would its reinforcement by repetition of the common enough Tarquin *exemplum* have lost all point at a later date. The fact that Lindsay repeats in the *Satyre* the same general theme used in the *Papyngo* of the banishment of Chastitie by Sensualitie, now ensconced in high places, and that in both cases these happenings are conceived as stemming from the Emperor Constantine's Donation of temporal powers to the Pope Sylvester need mean no more than that the *Donatio Constantini* was good Protestant propaganda *throughout* the pre-Reformation era and that an exile-of-Chastity episode in some form was necessary to the dramatist in terms of his plot. The

[7] Ibid., pp. 136-141.

[8] "Representations of Lyndsay's *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis,*" *PMLA,* XLVII (1932), 644.

"vivid eruption" of Johne the Comoun Weill in the *Dreme* was clearly too good stage business to leave unexploited in the *Satyre,* at whatever date.

In the *Satyre* King Humanitie appoints Sapience (*alias* Falset) as his secretary, Discretioun (*alias* Dissait) as his treasurer, and Devotioun (*alias* Flatterie) as his counsellor. When the advent of Divyne Correctioun is imminent and Flatterie has forsaken his own brethren for the Spiritualitie, Dissait enters into another band with Falset to steal the King's box and then himself makes off with the loot. In the parallel passage in the *Complaynt,* a matter of only some fifteen lines, "schir flattre" is shown "roundand and rowkand" and urging the corrupt courtiers to rob the royal treasure. If only the "Thesaureir" will stand by, he assures them, they need have no fear—"we sall part the pelf." Here the treasurer is identified by Hamer with Archibald Douglas, whose accounts open in October 1526 and who may have incurred the personal antagonism of Lindsay by trying to stop payment of his salary.[9] Professor MacQueen carries over this identification to Dissait-Discretioun, King Humanitie's treasurer in the *Satyre,* adding, moreover, Sir Thomas Erskine as the original of the secretary, Falset-Sapience. Douglas and Erskine, he says, are "the butts of Lindsay's wit" — this, incidentally, leaves Sir Flattery a little out of the picture — and the satire "only has point in terms of Lindsay's relationship to the Douglases before their downfall in 1528. The relevance would have vanished by the mid-thirties."[10]

To me, were this last parallel even closer than in fact it is, this argument of irrelevancy is unconvincing. What may have originated in the *Complaynt* in Lindsay's resentment against the then or recent Lord High Treasurer has broadened in the extant text of the play into universal satire. The falling out among rogues who have entered into a pact of eternal brotherhood is a widespread theme in literature, as a common fact of life. The various appearances of the Three Vices, right from the baptismal scene in Part I of the *Satyre* to the hangings of Dissait and Falset, with Flatterie once more abandoning his "marrowis," near the end of Part II, are rich in undateable comedy, with the particular "parallel" falling unobtrusively but inevitably into place in the general exposure of vice.

From the early summer of 1531 until January 1537, official records testify to Lindsay's absences abroad on diplomatic missions, first more

[9] Hamer, III, 56.

[10] MacQueen, pp. 139-140.

briefly in Flanders, then, at times for months at a stretch, in France. It would seem highly improbable that the author (past or future) of the *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* did not avail himself of every opportunity to sample the dramatic life of those countries, whether the entertainments on festive occasions at the imperial court and the court of the French king or the activities of the flourishing *sociétés joyeuses* and other similar bodies.[11] That, however, he had any single direct model for his play is not borne out by the evidence, evidence admittedly complicated, sometimes confused. Nor can we assume that because characters with similar names or motives common in continental texts (or for that matter in English ones) appear in the *Satyre,* they are necessarily of alien provenance. The fact that we have no clear record of any Scottish morality play, much less any morality text, other than that of Lindsay, should not be over-stressed. There are tragic gaps in our records; and the *Satyre* survived the Reformation not as morality play but as religious and political propaganda, when other specimens of the genre may well have perished.

Yet one must not be unreasonably cautious. In France the frequent pressing of the Three Estates, individually or collectively, into the service of plays and pageantry will strike any explorer of French texts and records of the period; and that Lindsay borrowed the idea of the Estates as *dramatis personae* for his own play and developed it to suit his requirements, with necessary adjustments to the Scottish scene, seems not too far-fetched a supposition. The general structure of the *Satyre* too, in which the *cry* or proclamation is followed by what Saintsbury conveniently terms a morality-farce-*sottie,* was surely not uninfluenced by the express combination of *sottie,* morality and farce in such plays as the *Jeu du Prince des Sotz* of Gringore, leader of the *Enfants sans souci,* where the explicit runs: "Fin du Cry, Sottie, Moralité et Farce composez par Pierre Gringoire dit Mère Sotte, et imprimé pour iceluy."[12] In the *Satyre,* Part I, the personal Morality of King Humanitie is linked by the farce-interlude of the Pardoner and the Pauper with Part II, the political Morality of the realm of Scotland. In one sense the whole of Part II might be read as an extended *sottie,* for the representatives of the Spiritualitie when divested of their ecclesiastical robes are discovered to be "bot verie fuillis" (l. 3726).

[11] See "The Influence of the Continental Drama on Lyndsay's 'Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis'," *MLR,* XXV (1930), 425-442, where I have dealt in some detail with this problem.

[12] Pierre Gringore, *Oeuvres complètes,* par MM. Ch. d'Héricault et A. de Montaiglon (Paris, 1858), I, 286.

But the Acts of Parliament to reform abuses are followed by a *sottie* in the stricter sense of the term when Folie enters with his bairns and his creel of fools' hats and, after much preliminary obscenity, preaches his sermon on the text *Stultorum numerus infinitus.* True, in Lindsay the lines of demarcation between the genres are less rigid. The morality in Part I has farcical episodes; the *sottie,* which here comes at the end of the play, instead of after the *cry,* is absorbed into the political morality; and the sermon is not, as apparently in some French instances, an isolated monologue in the sequence. The *cry* itself (Lindsay's own or not) having performed its normal function as a play-bill, turns, uniquely so far as I know, into a farce combining several stock themes before Nuntius closes proceedings with a final reminder of the date of the performance. Yet the main lines are there, and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that for the structure of his play, as for the rôle of the Three Estates, Lindsay found his original inspiration in the contemporary French stage.

To return, then, to the problem in hand, it would, of course, be absurd to reject the possibility of some sort of *Ur-Satyre* dating from the period when James V was young and unmarried and at the mercy of evil counsellors. Even the banns preserved in the Bannatyne MS. proclaiming the performance for Whitsun Tuesday the seventh of June could have served for a Cupar production as early as 1530 — not that Professor MacQueen uses this argument, rather the contrary — for this is one of the three years in the sixteenth century, the others being 1541 and 1552, when this particular Tuesday fell on that date; and the allusions to the Battle of Pinkie (1547) might be discounted as a later interpolation. But was this (hypothetical) play the play "in its essentials" as it has come down to us? To such a claim, which presupposes, it must be remembered, the close identification of King Humanitie with James V and disclaims any substantial expansion of the rôle for later performances in the fifties, there are several objections.

I wonder, though do not press this point, whether, during the lifetime of James V, Lindsay would have risked an intimate portrayal of the royal minority. The fact that he did something of the kind in the *Complaynt* and elsewhere is no real answer. There is after all some difference between a poetic text with presumably limited circulation and a public outdoor play for all and sundry, literate and illiterate alike.

Again, there is no evidence for Lindsay's having visited France before the spring of 1532, after which for the next five years he seems to have spent considerable time passing on diplomatic business between the two countries. If, then, my suggested French borrowings

are accepted and rank as "essentials," as I believe they do, and if this first version with all the "essentials" of the extant text dates from the "earlier thirties," the timetable is not impossible indeed but, for a play of this magnitude, distinctly less credible. One might argue that the Auld Alliance was still operative and that, even before setting foot on the soil of France, Lindsay could have acquired a certain familiarity with the French stage through reading, or through contacts with literary-minded Frenchmen on official visits to the Scottish court or literary-minded Scotsmen returning from France, or through those indeterminate French minstrels of whom there is a sprinkling in the pages of the Accounts of the Scottish Lord High Treasurer. But those are pallid substitutes in the field of conjecture for the lusty *Enfants sans souci* or *Clercs de la Basoche,* at whose revels in Paris Lindsay must surely in the French sense of the word, at least, have "assisted."

Finally, if we assume at this early stage a developed *Satyre* with most of what "makes the play memorable as a play," the "general inferiority" which Professor MacQueen ascribes to the Linlithgow play demands some explanation. A shorter version in the circumstances one might accept, even expect, but a sub-standard version from a seasoned playwright, and keen reformer withal, for a Royal Command performance on an important occasion is something yet again. It is, in fact, simpler all round to reinstate the Linlithgow play as the original, which was later expanded for a different situation and milieu and rewritten by a more experienced hand.

In the *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* the forceful satirist and tireless exhorter of the early poems is incorporated in the playwright, a playwright whose sense of theatre is beyond all question. Stock allegorical figures persist but they have taken on a new lease of life. The ingenious, if somewhat laboured, allegory in the *Papyngo,* in the course of which Lady Chastitie is accounted for genealogically and formally presented to the reader, is replaced in the *Satyre* by Chastitie's timely entry on the scene with the telling lines:

> How lang sall this inconstant warld indure
> That I sould baneist be sa lang alace:
> Few creatures or nane takis on me cure,
> Quhilk gars me monie nicht ly harbrieles . . . (ll. 1192-95)

Language and metre adapt themselves to character and situation and mood. The colloquial downrightness of John the Common-Weill contrasts with the slick professional patter of the Pardoner and the aureate eloquence of Divyne Correctioun or of Sensualitie in her first speeches at the royal threshold. The ceremonial pageantry of court or parliament

gives way, as occasion requires, to low life episodes and knockabout farce, or, as in the addresses of Thift and Dissait and Falset from the gallows, to topical revue, with catalogues of Border reivers and Cupar cronies. Yet the parts are closely interwoven. The personal Morality of Part I prepares for and merges into the politico-religious Morality of Part II, both of which are echoed in the *sottie* with the distribution of fools' hoods to all classes of society, not excepting the king. The Doctour's grave discourse from the pulpit is followed presently by the sermon of Folie from the same vantage point. Themes introduced in the earlier stages of the play are repeated later with variations. Characters used, and apparently dropped, assume their rôles once more. You think you have finished with the Sowtar and Taylor and their nagging wives, but the Sowtar with irate spouse in the offing bursts without warning into notice to claim a marriage dispensation from the Pardoner in the central interlude; and Sowtar and Taylour reappear in the session of the Three Estates to act as spokesmen for the honest crafts. The Pardoner defrauds the Pauper of his last groat, and the Pauper, unabashed, interrupts the deliberations of Parliament to confront the Spiritualitie with his blunt recital of grievances. For all its length and variety and complexity the play coheres and is structurally firm.

Here Lindsay has found his true medium, a medium in which he moves with ease and mastery. The early poems, to be sure, can offer their own very real rewards, not least the fresh untarnished language which so often surprises and delights. But they are in different, less demanding modes. And that the *Satyre* in anything like its present form belongs to the same decade as the *Dreme,* the *Complaynt* and the *Papyngo* seems, on internal evidence, a little hard to accept.

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